



Will Outside Consulting Really Benefit YOUR Company?

In the 1990's, business consulting grew quickly, with growth rates of the industry exceeding 20%. As a business service, consulting remains highly cyclical and linked to overall economic conditions. The consulting industry shrank during the 2001–2003 period, but grew steadily until the economic downturn in 2009. Since then, the consulting market has stabilized.

Management consulting is the practice of helping organizations to improve their performance, operating primarily through the analysis of existing organizational issues and the development of plans for improvement. Organizations may draw upon the services of business and/or management consultants for a number of reasons, including gaining external (and presumably objective) advice and access to the consultants' specialized expertise.

Before we move on, let's get the 'downside' of consulting out there. More disreputable consulting firms are sometimes accused of delivering empty promises, despite high fees, and charged with "stating the obvious" or lacking the experience upon which to base their advice. These consultants bring few innovations, instead offering generic strategies and plans that are irrelevant to the client's particular issue. It can be argued that the **mismatch** between management consulting advice and the ability of executives to actually create the change suggested, results in substantial damages to existing businesses.

Mismatch is a 'key' word here. Organizations must do their due diligence when opening up their "business" to a person or persons who will be reviewing and touching important company documents and information. In addition, and most critical, is to employ a consulting company who has proven their expertise in the field, industry and areas that will be reviewed and analysed. There are confidentiality agreements that will legally handle the company information privacy issue, therefore, taking time to research reputable firms who have years of experience and field expertise that qualify them, is what is critical. Requesting references is also a must.

So... you have one or several non-core areas that you feel could use assistance in solving various issues, pain points, improve productivity and save on operating expenses. Once you have made the decision to move forward with the help of an expert, consultancies can truly provide organizational change management assistance, the development of coaching skills, process analysis, technology implementation, strategy development, or operational improvement services. Management or business consultants often bring their own proprietary methodologies or frameworks to guide the identification of problems and to serve as the basis for recommendations for more effective or efficient ways of performing work tasks.

As a result of their exposure to, and relationships with numerous organizations, consulting firms are typically aware of industry "best practices". Experienced consultants have specialized skills on tasks that would involve high internal coordination costs for clients, such as organization-wide changes or the implementation of information technology. In addition, because of economies of scale, their focus and experience in gathering information across industries renders their information search less costly than for clients.

What to look for when employing your Consultant:

- Proven results with clients, reliability, responsiveness
- Industry Expertise
- Communication – single point of contact
- Guaranteed savings and expense reductions
- Technological expertise
- Price
- Innovation
- Delivery of raw data analytics and reporting
- Consulting and advice flexibility (Phased approach)

- Unbiased opinion (not an equipment company)

Some ways you can benefit:

- Allows you to focus on your core business
- Documented Employee Policy & Procedures
- Documented Process and Procedures and Efficiencies
- Documented savings and cost reductions
- Improvement of internal services
- Relationship/proactive communication
- End User Training (if requested)
- “Best in Class” – Benchmarking
- Proven return on your investment

Some consultants will review, analyse and deliver a one-time report and present you with their thought-out, however, bias solutions. An experienced consultant will offer up a phased approach and turnkey solution, offering potential clients a customized opportunity to determine root cause(s) and recommendations to re-engineer their processes from an industry expert. This expertise can offer up a more objective recommendation and innovative solutions. Consulting options in various phases will afford clients several choices and give them the opportunity to choose where to begin and where they choose to end the consulting project and recommendations.

To learn more about this topic and other OMG Value Added Services, please call 513-429-9526 or e-mail info@omgservices.com.